Supplementary Readings

To be used with *The Shaping of American Congregationalism*

*Readings in the History and Polity of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches*
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To be used with The Shaping of American Congregationalism

Rev. Dr. Arlin T. Larson, editor
PREFACE

Learning about the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches is not easy. No comprehensive history has been written. Only a few of the founders remain active. No seminary offers a course tailored to it. Months or years of participation, informal contacts, and overhearing the scuttlebutt are usually required. The "Congregational History and Polity" course is designed to accelerate the learning curve by immersing the student in modern Congregationalism's traditions and practices, as well as in the more comprehensive Congregational story.

We see this as essential for seminarians seeking a firm foundation in the community they are preparing to serve. Equally important is educating the many ministers who come to Congregationalism from other traditions. Church members seeking a better understanding of their faith may also appreciate a package that brings widely scattered materials together.

The first volume, for instance, of Readings in the History and Polity of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches collects Congregational reflections of the nature of the church(es) as recorded in the Congregationalist magazine. The articles collected are neither comprehensive nor definitive; we are not even certain to what extent they are representative. What can, however, be said is that the authors are men and women active in the Association whose views the magazine's editors deemed worthy of distribution.

At the very least the readings collected inform the reader of the parameters of discussion within the NACCC. They will additionally provide an introduction to leaders of the Congregational way and hopefully some insight into this movement's peculiar contribution to the Body of Christ.

This project is in its early stages. We would appreciate your suggestions and notice of our errors and omissions.

Rev. Dr. Arlin T. Larson, editor
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READINGS

Johnson, Edward. 1654. "Wonder-Working Providence of Sion's Savior." Catches the faith and vision underlying the Puritan migration to America.


Mather, Cotton. 1710. "Essays to do Good." Mather commends piety and good works above doctrinal conformity.


Basis of Union. 1949. The rationale and understandings presented to Congregational churches for the proposed United Church of Christ.


Committee on Free Church Polity and Unity. 1954. "Report of a Study by the Committee on Free Church Polity and Unity." Study of Congregational practices by representatives of both sides of the merger debate.
INTRODUCTION

Though of paramount importance to the sixteenth century founders of Congregationalism, and to the twentieth century founders of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, polity concerns have never constituted the sole focus of Congregationalism. Congregationalists have been deeply involved in the full range of American intellectual, cultural, social, and political life. The Supplementary Readings will engage you in this wider scope of concerns. Most are excerpted from longer works, hoping to give the flavor of the authors’ style and letting them define the issues in their own terms. Perhaps you will want to follow up with the complete version of some. The Congregational Library in Boston is available to help you find documents that are no longer in print.

These authors expressed concerns and views in ways considered exemplary or definitive by their contemporaries. It behooves us to pay attention. To understand earlier sections of the path we are now on. To gain insight into contemporary situations. Perhaps even to be wakened to issues and modes of understanding to which our ancestors were better attuned than we. Are certain actual events the will and action of God & others not? When, for example, Edward Johnson marvels at the “Wonder-working Providence of Zion’s Savior,” which he sees at work in the Puritan migration, it makes our contemporary sense of God’s working seems vague & indefinite. As mainline Protestantism is challenged by Pentecostalism and evangelicalism, the early Congregationalists’ focus on conversion and church membership again becomes relevant. Urbanism, multiculturalism, immigration? We have still not resolved the issues attended to by Josiah Strong and Washington Gladden.

Some works may feel vaguely alien, even objectionable, from a twentieth century perspective. It could be literary style. The use of “f” for “s” and “v” for “u” (and vice versa), the “thee’s” and “thou’s” of the seventeenth and eighteen centuries. Or it may be more substantive. Jonathon Edward’s “angry God.” William Ellery Channing’s debunking of traditional doctrines. Josiah Strong’s celebration of (and challenge to) the “Anglo-Saxon” race. The point, however, is not so much to judge as to understand the depth and scope of Congregational faith, and to appreciate its enormous creativity. Hopefully to let our minds be expanded by our forebears and join the dialogue with them in contemporary circumstances.

3/99
A VINDICATION
OF THE
GOVERNMENT
OF NEW-ENGLAND
CHURCHES
(1717)

BY

JOHN WISE
CHAP. I.

The Divine Establishment in Providence of the fore-named Churches in their Order is apparently the Royal act of the Supreme Monarch of the Churches, to the grave Decisions of Reason in favour of Man's Natural State of Being, and Original Freedom. For if we should make a new Survey of the Constitution before named under the brightest Light of Nature, there is no greater Example of natural Wisdom in any settlement on Earth; for the present and future security of Humane Beings in all that is most Valuable and Grand, then in this. That it seems to me as though Wise and Provident Nature by the dictates of Right Reason excited by the moving Suggestions of Humanity; and awed with the just demands of Natural Liberty, Equity, Equality, and Principles of Self-Preservation, Originally drew up the Scheme, and then obtained the Royal Approbation. And certainly it is agreeable that we attribute it to God whether we receive it nextly from Reason or Revelation, for that each is equally an Emanation of his Wisdom, Prov. 20. 27. The Spirit of Man is the Candle of the Lord, searching out the inward parts of the Belly. There be many larger Volumes in this dark Coels called the Belly to be read by that Candle God has Light up. And I am very well assured the fore-named Constitution is a Transcript out of some of their Pages, Joh. 1. 4, 9. And the Life was the Light of Men, which Lighteth every Man which cometh into the World. "This admirable Effect of Christ's Creating Power in hanging out so many Lights to guide man through a dark World, is as Applicable to the Light of Reason, as to that of Revelation. For that the Light of Reason as a Law and Rule of Right, is an Effect of Christ's goodness, care and creating Power, as well
Church Government of
as of Revelation; though Revelation is Nature's Law in a fairer and brighter Edition. This is granted by the London Ministers, p. 8. C. 3. 4 That, that which is evident by, and consonant to the true Light of Nature, or Natural Reason, is to be accounted, True Divine, in matters of Religion. But in the further and more distinct management of this Plea; I shall,

1. Lay before the Reader several Principles of Natural Knowledge.
2. Apply or improve them in Ecclesiastical affairs.
3. Infer from the Premises, a Demonstration that these Churches, if not properly formed; yet are fairly Established in their present Order by the Law of Nature.

CHAP. II.

1. I shall disclose several Principles of Natural Knowledge; plainly discovering the Law of Nature; or the true sentiments of Natural Reason, with respect to Man's Being and Government. And in this Essay I shall peculiarly confine the discourse to two heads, viz.

1. Of the Natural [in distinction to the Civil] and then,

2. Of the Civil Being of Man, And I shall Principally take Baron Puffendorff for my Chief Guide and Spokesman.
Church Government of wholly Extinct [as in Noah's Cave, being not Heir Apparent from Descendant from Adam] is it Nature that must go to work [with the King Bees, who themselves alone preserve the Royal Race in that Empire] to Breed a Monarch before the People can have a King, or a Government sent over them? And thus we must leave Kings to Resolve which is their best Title to their Crowns, whether Natural Right, or the Constitution of Government settled by Humane Compacts, under the Direction and Conduct of Reason. But to proceed under the head of a State of Natural Being, I shall more distinctly Explain the State of Humane Nature in its Original Capacity, as Man is placed on Earth by his Maker, and Clothed with many Inevitables, and Immunities which properly belong to Man separately considered. As,

1. The Prime Immunity in Man's State, is that he is most properly the Subject of the Law of Nature. He is the Favourite Animal on Earth; in that this Part of God's Image, viz. Reason is Congenate with his Nature, wherein by a Law Immutable, stamped upon his Frame, God has provided a Rule for Men in all their Actions, obliging each one to the performance of that which is Right, not only as to Justice, but likewise as to all other Moral Virtues, the which is nothing but the Dictate of Right Reason found in the soul of Man. "Vivay, De Alte, Pref."

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Pref. That which is to be drawn from Mans Reason, flowing from the true Current of that Faculty, when unperverted, may be said to be the Law of Nature; on which account, the Holy Scriptures declare it written on Mans hearts. For being indowed with a Soul, you may know from your self, how, and what you ought to do, Rom. 2:14. Threfore, having not a Law, are a Law to themselves. So that the meaning is, when we acknowledge the Law of Nature to be the dictate of Right Reason, we must mean that the Understanding of Man is Endowed with such a power, as to be able, from the Contemplation of Humane Condition to discover a necessity of Living agreeably with this Law: And likewise to find out some Principle, by which the Precepts of it, may be clearly and solidly Demonstrated. The way to discover the Law of Nature in our own State, is by a narrow Watch, and accurate Contemplation of our Natural Condition, and Proportion. Others say this is the way to find out the Law of Nature, fdl. If a Man any ways doubts, whether what he is going to do to another Man be agreeable to the Law of Nature, then let him appose himself to be in that other Mans Room; And by this Rule effectually Executed. A Man must be a very dull Scholar to Nature not to make Proficiency in the Knowledge of her Laws. But more Particularly in pursuing our Condition for the War-
Church Government of the Law of Nature, this is very obvious to view, viz.
1. A Principle of Self-Love, & Self-Preservation, is very predominant in every Man's Being.
2. A Sociable Disposition.
3. An Affection or Love to Man-kind in General. And to give such Sentiments the force of a Law, we must suppose a God who takes care of all Mankind, and has thus obliged each one, as a Subject of higher Principles of Being, then mere Instincts. For that all Law properly considered, supposes a capable Subject, and a Superior Power; And the Law of God which is Binding, is published by the dictates of Right Reason as other ways: Therefore says Plutarch, To follow God and obey Reason is the same thing. But moreover that God has Established the Law of Nature, as the General Rule of Government, is further illustrable from the many Sanctions in Providence, and from the Peace and Guilt of Conscience in them that either obey, or violate the Law of Nature. But moreover, the foundation of the Law of Nature with relation to Government, may be thus Discovered. for Man is a Creature extremely desirous of his own Preservation; of himself he is plainly Exposed to many Wants, unable to secure his own Safety, and Maintenance without the Assistance of his fellows; and he is also able of returning Kindness by the furtherance of mutual Good; But yet Man is often found to be Malicious, Infolate-

New-England Vindicated. and easily Provoked, and as powerful in effeding mischief, as he is ready in designing it. Now that such a Creature may be Prevented, it is necessary that he be Sociable; that is, that he be capable and disposed to unite himself to those of his own species, and to Regulate himself towards them, that they may have no fair Reason to do him harm; but rather incline to promote his Interests, and secure his Rights and Concerns. This then is a Fundamental Law of Nature, that every Man as far as in him lies, do maintain a Sociableness with others, agreeable with the main end and disposition of humane Nature in general. For this is very apparent, that Reason and Society render Man the most potent of all Creatures. And Finally, from the Principles of Sociableness it follows as a fundamental Law of Nature, that Man is not so Wedded to his own Interest, but that he can make the Common good the mark of his Aim: And hence he becomes Capacitated to enter into a Civil State by the Law of Nature; for without this property in Nature, viz. Sociableness, which is for Cementing of parts, every Government would soon moulder and dissolve.

2. The Second Great Immunity of Man is an Original Liberty Inframed upon his Rational Nature. He that intrudes upon this Liberty, Violates the Law of Nature. In this Discourse I shall wave
Church Government of the Consideration of Man's Moral Turpitude, but shall view him Physically as a Creature which God has made and furnished essentially with many Enobling Immunities, which render him the most August Animal in the World, and still, whatever has happened since his Creation, he remains at the upper-end of Nature, and as such is a Creature of a very Noble Character. For as to his Dominion, the whole frame of the Lower Part of the Universe is devoted to his use, and at his Command; and his Liberty under the Conduct of Right Reason, is equal with his trust. Which Liberty may be briefly Considered, Internally as to his Mind, and Externally as to his Person.

1. The Internal Native Liberty of Man in general implies, a faculty of Doing or Omitting things according to the Direction of his Judgment. But in a more special meaning, this Liberty does not consist in a loof and ungovernable Freedom, or in an unbounded Licence of Acting. Such Licence is disagreeing with the condition and dignity of Man, and would make Man of a lower and meaner Constitution than Brute Creatures; who in all their Liberties are kept under a better and more Rational Government, by their Instructors. Therefore as Plutarch says, Thouses Persons only who live in Obedience to Reason, are worthy to be accounted free: They alone live as they WILL, who have Learnt what they ought to WILL. So that

New-England Vindicated that the true Natural Liberty of Man, such as really and truly agrees to him, must be understood, as he is Guided and Restrainted by the Tyes of Reason, and Laws of Nature; all the rest is Brutal, if not worse.

2. Man's External Personal, Natural Liberty, Antecedent to all Humane parts, or Alliances must also be considered. And so every Man must be conceived to be perfectly in his own Power and disposal, and not to be conrolled by the Authority of any other. And thus every Man, must be acknowledged equal to every Man, since all Subjection and all Command are equally banished on both sides; and considering all Men thus at Liberty, every Man has a Prerogative to Judge for himself, viz. What shall be most for his Own, Happines and Well-being.

3. The Third Capital Immunity belonging to Man's Nature, is an equality amongst Men; which is not to be denied by the Law of Nature, till Man has Resigned himself with all his Rights for the sake of a Civil State; and then his Personal Liberty and Equality is to be cherished, and preferred to the highest degree, as will consist with all just distinctions amongst Men of Honour, and shall be agreeable with the publick Good. For Man has a high valuation of himself, and the passion seems to lay its first foundation not in Pride, but really in the high and admirable Frame and Constitution of Humane Nature.
Church Government of Nature. The Word man, I say my Author, is thought to carry somewhat of Dignity in its found; and we commonly make use of this as the most proper and prevailing Argument against a rude Intolerant, viz.: I am not a Beast or a Dog, but am a Man as well as your self. Since then Human Nature agrees equally with all persons; and since no one can live a Socisable Life with another that does not own or Repeal him as a Man; it follows as a Command of the Law of Nature, that every Man Esteem and treat another as one who is naturally his Equal, or who is a Man as well as he. There be many popular, or plausible Reasons that greatly Illustrate this Equality, viz.: that we all Derive our Being from one Rock, the same Common Father of humane Race. On this Consideration Barblius checks the pride of the Insulting Nobility.

Quid Genus et Provoa Strepis?
Si Primordia Vesta,
Aetereneque Deum Spelletas,
Nullus Degener Estus
Nisi viitis Pepra luentis,
Proprium Defrat Ostern.

Fondly our first Descent we boast;
If whence at first our Breath we drew,
The common springs of Life we quench,
The Airy Nation from is lost.

The Almighty made us equal all;
But he that slavishly compeys
to do the Drudgery of Vice,
Denies his high Original.

And also that our Bodies are Composed of matter, frail, brittle, and lyable to be destroyed by thousand Accidents; we all owe our Existence to the same Method of propagation. The Noblest Mortal in his Entrance on to the Stage of Life, is not distinguished by any pomp or of passage from the lowest of Mankind; and our Life hastens to the same General Mark: Death observes no Ceremony, but Knocks as loud at the Barriers of the Court, as at the Door of the Cottage. This Equality being admitted, bears a very great force in maintaining Peace and Friendship amongst Men. For that he who would use the Assistance of others, in promoting his own Advantage, ought as freely to be at their service, when they want his help on the like Occasions. One Good turn Requires another, is the Common Proverb; for other wise he must need esteem others unequal to himself, who constantly demands their Aid, and as constantly denies his own. And whoever is of this Insolent Temper, cannot but highly displease those about him, and soon give Occasion of the Breach of the Common Peace. It was a Manly Reproof which Charidles gave
gave the Romans. Num Si vos Omnibus &c. What! because you desire to be Matters of all Men, does it follow therefore that all Men should desire to be your Slaves, for that it is a Command of Natures Law, that no Man that has not obtained a particular and special Right, shall arrogate to himself a Larger share then his fellows, but shall admit others to equal Privileges with himself. So that the Principle of Equality in a Natural State, is peculiarly transgressed by Pride, which is when a Man without sufficient reason prefers himself to others. And though as Henius, Paraphrases upon Aristotele's Politicks to this Purpose. viz. Nothing is more suitable to Nature, then that those who Excel in Understanding and Prudence, should Rule and Control those who are less happy in those Advantages, &c. Yet we must note, that there is room for an Answer, that. That it would be the greatest absurdity to believe, that Nature actually invests the Wife with a Sovereignty over the weak; or with a Right of forcing them against their Wills: for that no Sovereignty can be established, unless some Humane Deed, or Covenant Precede: Nor does Natural Hands for Government make a Man presently Governor over another; for that as Ulpian says, by a Natural Right all Men are born free; and Nature having let all Men upon a Level and made them Equals, no Servitude or Subjection can be conceived without Inequality;

New-England Vindicated. quality; and this cannot be made without Usurpation or Force in others, or Voluntary Compliance in those who resign their freedom, and give away their degree of Natural Being. And thus we come,

2. To consider Man in a Civil State of Being; wherein we shall observe the great difference between a Natural and Political State; for in the latter State many great disproportions appear, or at least many obvious distinctions are soon made amongst Men; which Doctrine is to be laid open under a few Heads.

1. Every Man considered in a Natural State, must be allowed to be Free, and at his own Disposal; yet to suit Mins Inclinations to Society; And in a peculiar manner to gratify the necessity he is in of publick Rule and Order, he is impelled to enter into a Civil Community; and Devises himself of his Natural Freedom, and puts himself under Government; which among other things Comprehends the Power of Life and Death over Him; together with Authority to Injourn him some things to which he has an utter Aversion; and to prohibit him other things, for which he may have as strong an Inclination; so that he may be often under this Authority, obliged to sacrifice his Private, for the Publick Good. So that though Man is inclined to Society, yet he is driven to a Combination by great necessity. For that the true and leading Cause of forming Governments, and yielding up Natural Liberty, and throwing Men Equality into a Common Pile to be new Cast by the Rules of fellowship; was really and truly to guard themselves against the Injures
Church Government of

44 Men were liable to Interchangeably; for
some for Good to Man, as Man, and yet none
of greater Enemy. So that,

2. The first Humane Subject and Original
of Civil Power is the People. For as they have
a Power every Man over himself in a Natural
State, to upon a Combination they can and do,
bequeath this Power unto others; and settle
it according as their united discretion shall
Determine. For that this is very plain, that
when the Subject of Sovereign Power is quite
Extinict, that Power returns to the People a-

gain. And when they are free, they may set
up what species of Government they please; or
if they rather incline to it, they may subsute
into a State of Natural Being, if it be plainly
for the best. In the Eastern Country of the
Mosul, we have some resemblance of the Case;
for upon the Death of an absolute Monarch,
they live so many days without a Civil Head;
but in that Interregnum, those who survive the
Vacancy, are glad to get into a Civil State a-

gain; and usually they are in a very Bloody
Condition when they return under the Covert
of a new Monarch; this projects is to inder
the People to a Tyranny, from the Experience.
they have of late had of an Anarchy.

3. The end of Government is the
Will of a Community, yielded up and sur-
rrended to some other Subject, either of one
particular Person, or more, Conveyed in the
following manner.

Let us conceive in our Mind a multitude of
Men, all Naturally Free & Equal; going about
voluntarily, to Erect themselves into a new
Common-Wealth. Now their Condition being
such

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45 such, to bring themselves into a Politick Body,
they must needs Enter into divers Covenants.

1. They must Interchangeably each Man Co-

venant to joyn in one taking Society, that they
may be capable to concert the measures of their
Safety, by a Publack Vote.

2. A Vote or Decree must then nextly pass
to set up some Particular species of Govern-

ment over them. And if they are joined in
their first Compact upon absolute Terms to
stand to the Decision of the first Vote con-
cerning the Species of Government: Then all
are bound by the Majority to acquiesce in that
particular Form thereby settled, though their
own private Opinion, incline them to some
other Model.

3. After a Decree has specified the Particular
form of Government, then there will be need
of a New Covenant, whereby thoes on whom
Sovereignty is conferred, engage to take care of
the Common Peace, and Welfare. And the
Subjects on the other hand, to yield them faith-
ful Obedience. In which Covenant is included
that Submission and Union of Wills, by which
2 State may be conceived to be but one Person.
So that the most proper Definition of a Civil
State, is this. viz. A Civil State is a Compound
Moral Person, whose Will [United by thoes
Covenants before passed] is the Will of all;

to the end it may Use, and Apply the strength
and riches of Private Persons towards main-
taining the Common Peace, Security, and Well-
being of all. Which may be conceived as tho
the whole State was now become but one Man;
in which the aforesaid Covenants may be sup-
posed under Gods Providence, to be the Dis-
Church Government of

1. The Sovereign Power is the Soul infused, giving Life and Motion to the whole Body.
2. Subordinate Officers are the Joyns by which the Body moves.
3. Wealth and Riches are the Strength.
4. Equity and Laws are the Reason.
5. Councillors the Memory.
6. Satus Populi, or the Happiness of the People, is the End of its Being; or main Business to be attended and done.
7. Concord amongst the Members, and all Efforts, is the Health.
8. Sedition is Sickness, and Civil War Death.
4. The Parts of Sovereignty may be considered: So,
1. As it Prescribes the Rule of Action: It is rightly termed Legislative Power.
2. As it determines the Controversies of Subjects by the Standard of those Rules: So is it justly termed Judiciary Power.
3. As it Arms the Subjects against Foreigners, or forbids Hostility, so it is called the Power of Peace and War.
4. As it takes in Ministers for the discharge of Business, so it is called the Right of Appointing Magistrates: So that all great Officers and Publick Servants, must needs owe their Original to the Creating Power of Sovereignty. So that those whose Right it is to Create, may Dissolve the being of those who are Created, unless they cast them into an Immortal Frame. And yet must needs be disfirable if they unjustly forfeit their being to their Creators.

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5. The Chief End of Civil Communities, is that Men thus conjoined, may be secured against the Injuries, they are liable to from their own Kind. For if every Man could secure himself singly; it would be great folly for him, to Renounce his Natural Liberty, in which every Man is his own King and Protector.
6. The Sovereign Authority beides that it inheres in every State as in a Common and General Subject. So farther according as it refides in some One Person, or in a Council consisting of some Select Persons, or of all the Members of a Community as in a proper and particular Subject, so it produceth different Forms of Common-wealths, viz. Such as are either simple and regular, or mixed.
7. The Forms of a Regular State are three only, which Forms arise from the proper and particular Subject, in which the Supreme Power Refides. As,
1. A Democracy, which is when the Sovereign Power is Lodged in a Council consisting of all the Members, and where every Member has the Privilege of a Vote. This Form of Government, appears in the greatest part of the World to have been the most Ancient. For that Reason seems to shew it to be most probable, that when Men [being Originally in a condition of Natural Freedom and Equality] had thoughts of joyning in a Civil Body, would without question be inclined to Administer their common Affairs, by their common Judgment, and so much necessarily to gratifie that Inclination, established a Democracy; neither can it be rationally imagined, that Fathers of Families being yet Free and Independent, should in a moment, or little
Church Government of little time take off their long delight in govern-
ing their own Affairs, & Devolve all upon some
Single Sovereign Commander; for that it seems
to have been thought more Equitable, that what
belonged to all, should be managed by all, when
all had entered into a Compact into one Com-
munity. The Original of our Government, says
Plato, [speaking of the Athenian Common-
wealth] was taken from the Equality of our Race.
Other States there are composed of different Blood,
and of unequal Lines, the Consequence of which
are disproportional Sovereignty, Tyrannical or
Oligarchical Slavery; under which men live in
such a manner, as to Esteem themselves partly
Lords, and partly Slaves to each other. But we
and our Country-men, being all Born Brethren of
the same Mother, do not look upon our selves, as
standing under so hard a Relation, as that of Lords
and Slaves; but the Parity of our Deferent incline
us to keep up the like Parity by our Laws, and
to yield the precedence to nothing but to Superior
Virtue and Wisdom. And moreover it seems
very manifest that most Civil Communities
proceed from the Union of Families, that
were nearly allied in Race and Blood. And
though Ancient Story make frequent mention
of Kings, yet it appears that most of them
were such that had an Influence rather in per-
swading, than in any Power of Commanding.
Sir Julius describes that Kind of Government,
as the most Primitive, which Aristotle calls an
Heroical Kingdom, viz. Such as is no ways
Inconsistent with a Democratical State. Di
Princip. Rerum. 1. L. 1. C.
A democracy is then Erected, when a Num-
ber of Free Persons, do Assemble together,
in

New-England Vindicated. in Order to enter into a Covenant for Uniting
themselves in a Body: And such a Preparative
Assembly hath some appearance already of
Democracy; it is a Democracy in Embryo,
properly in this Respect, that every Man hath
the Privilege freely to deliver his Opinion
concerning the Common Affairs. Yet he who
differs from the Vote of the Majority, is not
in the least obliged by what they determine,
till by a second Covenant, a Popular Form be
actually Established; for not before then can
we call it a Democratical Government, viz.
Till the Right of Determining all matters re-
ating to the publick Safety, is actually placed
in a General Assembly of the whole People;
or by their own Compact and Mutual Agree-
ment, Determine themselves the proper Sub-
ject for the Exercise of Sovereign Power. And
to compleat this State, and render it capable to
Exert its Power to answer the End of a Civil
State: these Conditions are necessary.
1. That a certain Time and Place be Appointed
for Assembling.
2. That when the Assembly be Orderly met,
as to Time and Place, that then the Vote of
the Majority must pass for the Vote of the
whole Body.
3. That Magistrates be appointed to Exercise
the Authority of the whole for the better dis-
patch of Business, of every day's Occurrence;
who also may with more mature diligence,
search into more important Affairs; and if in
case anything happens of greater Consequence,
may report it to the Assembly; and be pecu-
liarly Serviceable in putting all Publick Decrees
into Execution. Because a large Body of Peo-
Church Government of

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It is said of the British Empire, that it is such a Monarchy, as that by the necessary subordinate Occurrence of the Lords and Commons in the Making and Repealing all Statutes or Acts of Parliament, it hath the main Advantages of an Aristocracy, and of a Democracy, and yet free from the Disadvantages and Evils of either. It is such a Monarchy, as by most Admira
table Temperament affords very much to the Industry, Liberty, and Happiness of the Subject, and reserves enough for the Majesty and Prerogative of any King, who will own his People as Subjects, not as Slaves. It is a Kingdom, that of all the Kingdoms of the World, is most like to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, whose Yoke is easy, and Burden light. Present State of England 1st Part 64 p. Thus having drawn up this brief Scheme concerning Man, and the Nature of Civil Government, he is become sole Subject of. I shall now proceed to make Improvements of the Premises, to accommodate the main Subject under our Consideration.

2. I shall now make some Improvement of the foregoing Principles of Civil Knowledge, fairly deduced from the Law of Nature. And I shall particularly refer to Ecclesiastical Affairs, whereby we may in probability discover more clearly the Kind, and something of the Nature of that Government, which Christ has plac'd in and over his Church. The Learned Debates of Men, and Divine Writ sometimes seems to cast such a Grandure on the Church & its Officers, as tho' they stood in Peerage with Civil Empire. Rev. 1.6. 9 1 Pet. 2.9. 1 Cor. 4.8. 1 Cor. 12. 28. 2 Cor. 10. 8. But all such Expressions must needs be other-ways Interpreted. God
Church Government of
is the highest Cause that acts by Council; and
it must needs be altogether repugnant, a
thought he should foresee the State of the
World by no better a Scheme, than to Or
der two Sovereign Powers, in the same Grand
Community, which would be like placing two
Suns in the Firmament, which would be to
set the Universe into a Flame: That should
such an Error happen, one must needs be forth-
with Extinguished, to bring the Frame of
Nature into a just Temper, and keep it out
of harms way. But to proceed with my Pur-
pose, I shall go back upon the Civil Scheme,
and inquire after two things: First of Rebel-
lion against Government in general, and that
in special; whether any of the aforesaid Spe-
cies of Regular Government can be predic-
able of the Church of God on Earth.
1. In General concerning Rebellion against
Government for Particular Subjects to break in
upon Regular Communities duly Established,
is from the premises to Violate the Law of
Nature; and is a high Usurpation upon the first
grand Immunities of Mankind. Such Rebels in
States, and Usurpers in Churches affront the
World, with a presumption that the Bell of
the Brotherhood are a Company of Fools, and
that themselves have fairly Monopolized all the
Reason of Humane Nature. Yea, they take up-
on them the Boldness to assume a Prerogative
of trampling under foot the natural original E-
quity & Liberty of their Fellowes; for to pull
the Proprietors of Settlements out of posses-
sion of their old, and impose new Schemes upon
them, is virtuously to declare them in a State
of Vassalage, or that they were Born so; and
therefore

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inure them they shall not be Sold at the next
Market: They must esteem it a favour, for by
this time all the Original Prerogatives of Man's
Nature are intentionally a Victim, smoaking to
satiate the Usurpers Ambition. It is a very tart
Obserivation on an English Monarch, and where
it may by proportion be applied to a Subject
must needs sink very deep, and serve for evi-
dence under this Head. It is in the Secret His-
tory of K. C. 2. and K. & 2. p. 2. Says my Au-
thor, Where the Constitution of a Nation is such,
that the Laws of the Land are the Measure both
of the Sovereign Commands, and the Obedience of
the Subjects, whereby it is Provided; that as the
one are not to invade what by Concessions and Stip-
ulations is granted to the Ruler; so the other is
not to deprive them of their lawful and determi-
ned Rights and Liberties; then the Prince who
braves to subvert the Fundamental Laws of the
Society, is the Traitor and the Rebel, and not the
People, who endeavour to Preserve and Defend
their own. It's very applicable to particular
Men in their Rebellions or Usurpations in
Church or State.
2. In special I shall now proceed to Enquire,
Whether any of the aforesaid Species of regular,
unmixt Governments, can with any good shew of
Reason be predicatable of the Church of Christ
on Earth. If the Churches of Christ, as Chur-
ches, are either the Object or Subject of a So-
vereign Power intrusted in the hands of Men, then
most certainly one of the fore-cited Schemes of
a perfect Government will be applicable to it.
Before I pursue the Enquiry, it may not be
improper to pause, & make some Caution here,
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by distinguishing between that which may have
some Resemblance of Civil Power, and the
thing it self; and so the Power of Churches is
but a faint Resemblance of Civil Power; it
comes in reality nothing near to the thing it
self; for the one is truly Coercive, the other
permissive; the one is Sovereign Power, the oth-
er is Delegated and Ministerial: But not to
delay, I shall proceed with my Enquiry, and
therein shall endeavour to humour the several
great Claimers of Government in the Church of
Christ. And

1. I shall begin with a Monarchy. It's cer-
tain, his Holiness, either by reasonable Pleas, or
powerful Cheats, has assumed an absolute and
universal Sovereignty; this fills his Cathedral
Chair, and is adorned with a Triple Crown,
and in Defence thereof does protest, The Al-
mighty has made him both Key-keeper of Heaven
and Hell, with the adjacent Territories of Pur-
gery, and vested in him an absolute Sovereignty
over the Christian World. And his Right has so
far prevailed, that Princes and Civil Monarchs
hold their Crowns and Donations as his Dutiful
Sons, and Loyal Subjects; he therefore deems
himself with the Spoils of the Divine Attributes,
fitting himself, Our Lord God, Optimus, Ma-


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at pious Gates. Another has thrown him-
self down prostrate, a humble Penitent before
him: He has placed his Holy Foot on the Mon-
archs profane Neck as crushing a Serpent,
crawling out of the Stable of his Sovereignty;
and others frequently kiss his Toes with very
profound Devotion. These and such like Tri-
umphant Signals of his Sovereign Power does
he wear. And indeed if he is the Universal Mon-
arch of the Catholic Church, Princes that are
Members of it must needs knock under; for
that in one World there cannot possibly be two
Molt Highs, any more than two Infinites. Thus
you see the Clergy, or Gospel Ministry of the
Christian World have to wisely handled busi-
nesses, and managed the Gospel, that they have fairly
[as they avouch] found a Sovereign Power be-
queathed in it to the Ministry of Christ, and
reposingly more warily and nicely, at last, found
a Spiritual Monarch, very compleatly furnished
with the Keys of all sorts of Power hanging at
his Girdle; and may we not pronounce the wiser
they! seeing the World growing weary of
Religion, was willing to toll it self down to
Sleep, and leave them in sole Trust with the
whole Interest of God's Kingdom. But tho' Enquiry is, Whether this sort of Government
has not plainly subverted the Design of the Go-
pel, and the end for which Christ's Government
was Ordained, viz. the Moral, Spiritual, and
Eternal Happiness of Men?

But I have no occasion to pursue this Remark
with tedious Demonstrations: It's very plain,
it's written with Blood in Capital Letters, to
be Read at Midnight by the Flames of Smith-
field, and other such like Consecrated Fires.

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That the Government of this Ecclesiastical Monarch has instead of Sanctifying, absolutely Debauched the World, and subverted all good Christianity in it. So that without the least show of any vain presumption we may infer, That God and wise Nature were never Propitious to the Birth of this Monster.

An Aristocracy which places the Suprem Power in a Select Company of choice Persons. Here I freely acknowledge were the Gospel Ministry Established the Subject of this Power, viz. To Will and Do, in all Church Affairs without controll, &c. This Government might do to support the Church in its most valuable Rights, &c. If we could be assured they would make the Scripture, and not their private Will, the Rule of their Personal and Ministerial Actions: And indeed upon these terms any Species of Government, might serve the great design of Redemption; but considering how great an Interest is imbarke, and how frail a bottom we trust, though we should rely upon the best of Men, especially if we remember what is in the hearts of Good Men, [viz. Much ignorance, abundance of small ends, many times cloaked with a high Pretence in Religion; Pride Skulking and often breeding revenge upon a small affront; and blown up by a pretended Zeal; Yet really and truly by nothing more Divine than Interest, or ill Nature] and also considering how very uncertain we are of the real goodness of thole we esteem good Men; and also how impossible it is to secure the Inheritance of it to Successors: And also if we remit how Christianity by the foresaid Principle has been peel'd, rob'd, and spoile already; it cannot confite with the Light of Nature to venture again upon such Perils, especially if we can find a safer way home More Difinctly.

It is very plain [allowing me to speak Emblematically] the Primitive Constitution of the Churches was a Democracy, as appears by the foregoing Parallel. But after the Christian Churches were received into the favour of the Imperial Court, under the Dominion of Constantine the Great; there being many Preliminaries which had furnished the Ministers with a disposition therefore, they quickly deprived the Fraternities of their Rights in the Government of the Churches, when they were once provided of a plentiful maintenance through the Liberality of Constantine, that when Christianity was so Luxuriously treated, as by his great Bounty, and Noble Settlement, it is said there was a Voice heard from Heaven, saying, Non est Poyon pour'd into the Church, But the Subversion of the Constitution, is a story too long now to tell. Take therefore part of it, out of a late Author well veried in Antiquity, which may give some brief Image of the whole.

Non Multi Secula jus Plebis Illorum Manet, neque alter Evenire Fortuit, Quin Incl. vel assi-
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my left to Interrupt, or Controll the Conquerors. This was the manner of the Clergy till they had made themselves the Subjects of all Power and then acted Arbitrarily, and did what they pleased in the Church of God.

But let the learned, knowing World, consider, what the Issue of all this was, feit what a wretched capacity the crownefs & cowardize of the People; and the Ulurpation and Ambition of the Ministry brought the Professing World into. If those who were truly Godly on both sides had in a few Ages looked down from Heaven, and had Eyed the following Centurys; they might have beheld a world of matter for sorrowful Impressions; to think that they themselves had Occasioned the Ruin of Millions, by their remifs and paifie temper in one Sort; and too much humouring, and nourishing Pride, and high conceits of themselves and others, in the other; when as if they had stood firm to the Government as left letted by the Apostles; they had certainly prevented an Apostacy that has damned, and confounded a great part of about Thirty Generations of Men, Women, and Children.

That for my own part I can upon Experience, in some measure truly lay [to the History of the Primitive Churches in the loss of their Government; and the Consequents which followed, when I am impelled to repeat it to my self ] as one Enclas said to Queen Dido.

In-
So doleful a Contemplation is it to think the World should be destroyed by thofe Men, who by God were Ordained to save it!

In a Word, an Aristocray is a dangerous Constitution in the Church of Christ, as it poifons the Presbytery of all Church Power: What has been observed sufficiently Evinces it. And not only fo but from the Nature of the Constitution, for it has no more Barrier to it, againft the Ambition, Infuls, and Arbitrary meafures of Men, than an absolute Monarchy. But to abbreviate; it feems most agreeable with the Light of Nature, that if there be any of the Regular Government settled in the Church of God it must needs be.

3. A Democracy. This is a form of Government, which the Light of Nature does highly value, & often diretts to as most agreeable to the Juft and Natural Prerogatives of Humane Beings. This was of great account, in the early times of the World. And not only fo, but upon the Experience of several Thoufand years, after the World had been tumbled, and toft from one Species of Government to another, at a great Expence of Blood and Treasure, many of the wise Nations of the World have sheltered themselves under it again; or at leaft have bleffed, and balanced their Governments with it.

It is certainly a great Truth, fay, That Man's Original Liberty after it is Refigned, yet under due Restrictions, ought to be Cherifhed in all Wife Governments; or otherwise a man in making himself a Subject, he alters himself from a Freeman, into a Slave, which to do is Repugnant to the Law of Nature. Also the Natural Equality of Men amongst Men must be duly favoured; in that Government was never established by God or Nature, to give one Man a Prerogative to ilter over another; therefore in a Civil, as well as in a Natural State of Being, a just Equality is to be indulged fo far as that every Man is bound to Honour every Man, which is agreeable both with Nature and Religion, 1 Pet. 2. 17. Honour all Men. ----- The End of all good Government is to Cultivate Humanity, and Promote the happiness of all, and the good of every Man in all his Rights, his Life, Liberty, Estate, Honour, &c. without injury or abuse done to any. Then certainly it cannot easily be thought, that a company of Men, that shall enter into a voluntary Compact, to hold all Power in their own hands, thereby to use and improve their united force, wisdom, riches and strength for the Common and Particular good of every Member, as is the Nature of a Democracy;
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Government like a Democracy to attain this End. There is but about two steps from
an Aristocracy, to a Monarchy, and from thence but one to a Tyranny; an able stand-
ing force, and an Ill-Nature, \textit{ipso facto}, turns
an absolute Monarch into a Tyrant; this is
obvious among the Roman Caesars, and through
the World. And all these direful Transmu-
rations are easier in Church affairs [from the
different Qualities of things] then in Civil
States. For what is it that cunning and
learned Men can't make the World swallow
as an Article of their Creed, if they are once
invested with an Uncontrollable Power, and
are to be the standing Orators to Mankind
in matters of Faith and Obedience? Indeed
some very wise and learned Men are pleased
to inveigh, and Reproach the Notion of a
Democracy in the Church, which makes the	extit{ Civitate fidelium} or Community of the Faithful
the first Subject of the Power of Government.
This they say tends to Brownism; and abhor-
ed Anarchy; and then say they upon such
premises it must needs follow that every
Member of the Body must be an Officer;
and then every one must Preach and Dispense
the Sacraments, &c.

Reply. Certainly such Gentlemen, either
designs to pique and baffle their Reader with
falsity; or they themselves never took up, or
understood the true Ideas of the several Spe-
ties of Government; in that a Democracy is
64 Church Government of as Regular a form, and as particular as any other. For,
1. An absolute or limited Monarch cannot manage the Power or Government Devolved upon him, without the great Officers of the Crown, or a large Set of Ministers; tho' possibly he may with quicker dispatch issue out his Decrees, yet he must Execute all by his Ministry. And why may not a Democracy be indulged the same Liberty? and this will prevent all Anarchy or Confusion most apparently. But,
2. The bitter Pill to swallow in this Doctrine of a Democracy in the Church, is the terrible power of Life and Death; or the accountablenes of particular Members to the Assembly, and especially those in the Ministry; but yet this is agreeable with the Nature of the Constitution, and easily managed without Anarchy, or popular Confusion also, which would be made very evident, if we should but run the parallel in all points between the Democracy of the State and Church. But nextly from the Premises, I shall
3. Infer, That if these Churches are not properly formed, yet are fairly Established in their present Order by the Law of Nature, and will they not be advised, I would Enjoin them to try who will be so bold as to dare to dissemble them. A Monarchy has been tried in the Church with a witness, but it has absolutely failed us. An Aristocracy in a deep Calm threw the Democracy Overboard, and took not only the Helm in hand, but seized Ship and Cargo as their Right and Title; but after some time brought all to Ship-wreck, and that in a good Harbour too.

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A Democracy was the noble Government which beat out in all the bad Weather of Ten bloody Persecutions under the management of Antiquity. And this is our Constitution, and what can we be pleased? This Constitution is as agreeable with the Light and Laws of Nature as any other whatsoever, as has been fairly hid down, and fully Evinced, and more accommodated to the Concerns of Religion than any other. Therefore I shall now conclude my Demonstration with this brief Appeal to the common Reason of Mankind, viz.
How can it consist with the Honourable Terms man holds upon here on Earth; that the best part of Men that we can find in the World; such men as are adorned with a double sest of Enobling Immunities, the first from Nature, the other from Grace; that these men when they enter into Chartered Party to manage a Trade for Heaven, must stoop to be clapt under a Government, that is Arbitrary and Dispotick; yea that carries the plain Symptoms of a Tyranny in it, when the Light of Nature knows of a better Species, and frequently has made use of it? It wants no farther Demonstration, for it's most apparent, that Nature is so much Mistress of her Self, that man in a Natural State of Being, is under God the first Subject of all Power, and therefore can make his own Choice, and by deliberate Compact settles his own Conditions for the Government of himself in a Civil State of Being: And when a Government so Settled shall throw itself from its Foundations, or the Subjects of Sovereignty shall subvert or confound the Constitution, they then degrade themselves; and so all Power returns again to the
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pose their lawful Rulers, the sharpest penalty in this World, is too easy for them; the Inquisition is but dallying and playing with them, Hell is their defect. But how it comes about that a State of Grace, when in want of a suitable Government, is become such a Vassal, and wise and cunning Nature is by her Creator intrusted, and adorned with more ennobling Privileges, I must leave; and resign unto those Learned Men to Solve, who plead for an Aristocracy in the Churches of Christ.

But to wind up the whole Discourse in a few words, I acknowledge many Objections may be here made, and several Questions of Moment might here fall under Debate; but having obtained what I have principally sought for, in traversing the paths of Nature, in the three following Particulars; therefore with them, and with one Objection answered; and also with some brief Improvement of the Grand Hypothet-Is in this Demonstration, I shall finish the Argument.

1. Three Particulars; or so many golden Maxims, securing the Honour of Congregational Churches.

Particular 1. That the People, or Fraternity under the Gospel, are the first Subject of Power; or else Religion sinks the Dignity of Humane Nature into a lower Capacity with relation to Ecclesiastical, then it is in, a Natural State of being with relation to Civil Government.

Particular 2. That a Democracy in Church or State, is a very honourable and regular Government according to the Dictates of Right Reason. And therefore,

Particular 3. That these Churches of New-

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verment; but if Divine Wisdom is pleased to interpose and over-rule Natures agitations, and gift the Scales for this or that particular Form, Nature will be but fair mannered to submit to its Author and Rector. So that if we find that God has disclosed his Mind by Revelation, that his Churches be the Subjects of a Democracy, then all stand obliged to comply under a double Bond. And so we come under a proper Crisis to enquire in the next place for Scripture-evidence in the justification of these Churches.

But before I proceed to it, I shall

3. Make some brief improvement of the main Hypothesis in the Demonstration; that is to say, If the Government of the Gospel Churches be a Democracy, these Consequences must necessarily follow, &c.

1. Conf. That the Right of Convoking Councils Ecclesiastical, is in the Churches.

2. Conf. That such a Council has only Consultative, not a Juridicial Power in it. A Juridical Power committed to such a Representative Body is both needleless, and also dangerous to the distinct and perfect States they derive from. Compleat States settled upon Body of immutable and imperial Laws as its Bases, must have Council; but to Create a new Subject of Juridicial Power, is some way to endanger the Being of the Creators.

3. Conf. That all the Members of an Ecclesiastical Council, deriving from a Democracyare Subjects of equal Power. Whatever the Power is, the several Delegates must from the nature of the Government they derive from, be equal sharers in it. Democratical States, in their Representative Body can make but one Hopes, because
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because they have but one Subject of Supreme Power in their Nature, and therefore their Delegates, let them be who or what they may be, are under equal Trust; so that none can justly claim Superiority over their Fellows, or pretend to a higher power in their Suffrage. Indeed, in such Kingdoms, where the Sovereign Power is distributed and settled in divers Subjects, that the balance of Power may be more even, for the safety of the whole, and of all parts under all Acts of Sovereign Power.

From such a Settlement of Power, there arises several distinct States in the same Government, which when Convened as one Subject of Sovereign Power, they make different Houses in their Grand Sessions; and so one House or State can Negative another. But in every distinct House of these States, the Members are equal in their Vote; the most Ayes makes the Affirmative Vote, and most No’s the Negative: They don’t weigh the intellectual furniture, or other distinguishing Qualifications of the several Voters in the Scales of the Golden Rule of Fellowship; they only add up the Ayes, and the No’s, and so determine the Suffrage of the House.